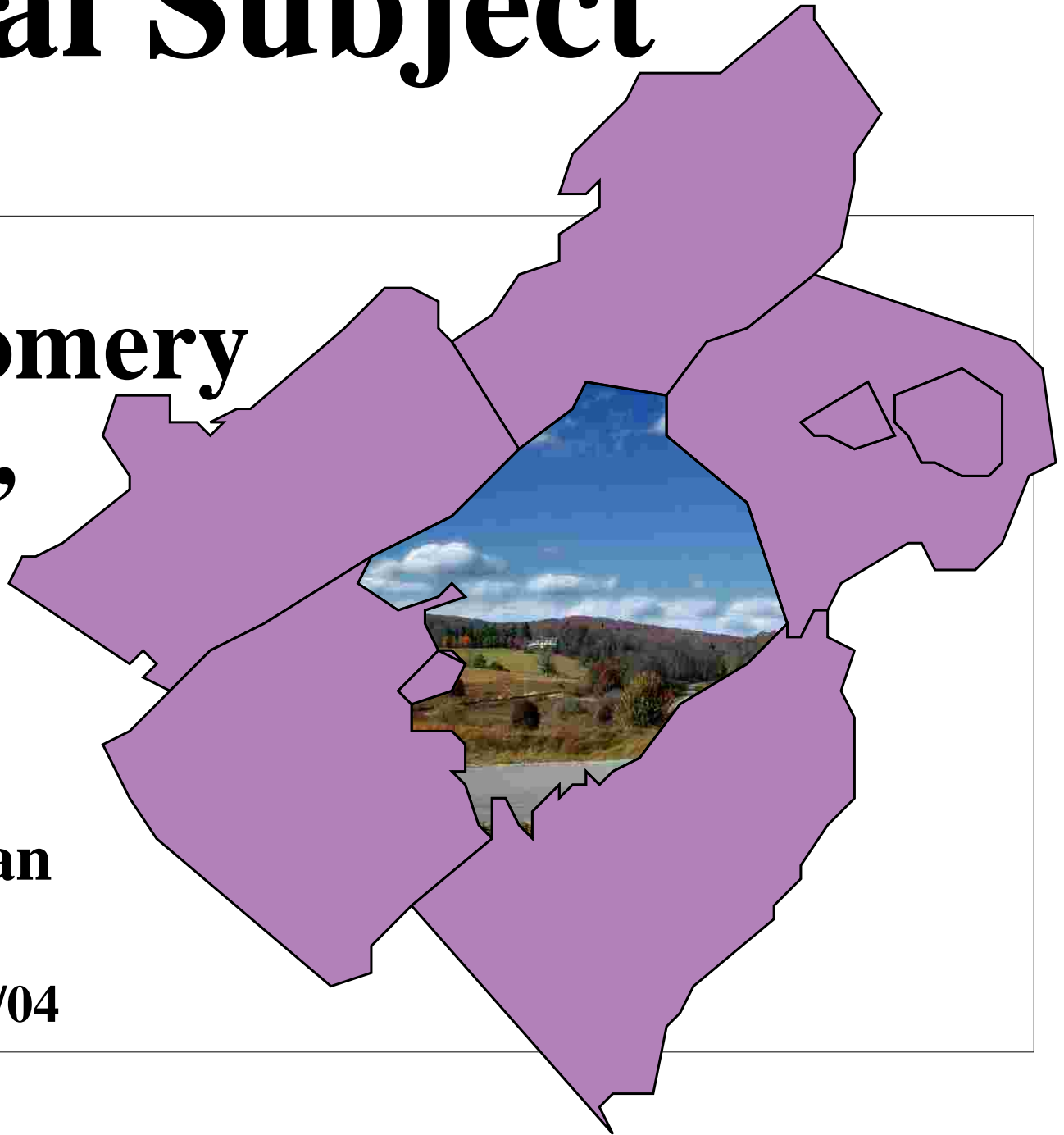


Special Subject Plans

**Montgomery
County,
2025**

**1990
Bikeway/
Walkway Plan**

Adopted: 10/12/04



1990 Bikeway/Walkway Plan

Purpose

This plan was written to serve as a guide to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors in the development of county biking/walking routes. Due to unsafe conditions, many routes discussed in this plan are currently not designated as routes. It is anticipated that this plan will encourage the funding of lanes and trails where they are needed.

History

In previous years, bike planning for Montgomery County has been on a limited basis. While Montgomery County was included in the 1974 regional bike plan prepared by the New River Valley Planning District Commission, the county itself did not initiate bike planning until 1989.

In 1976, for the nation's bicentennial, the TransAmerican Bike Trail was developed. Montgomery County was fortunate to have part of this prominent route running from the northeast to the southwest of the County. This was the first designated bike route in the unincorporated part of Montgomery County.

In 1989, the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors approved the funding of 3.9 miles of bike lanes along Lusters Gate Road (St Rte 723) to be completed when the road is widened and improved by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Following the approval of this project, the Board requested that a county-wide bike plan be prepared as part of the revision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Justification

There are numerous reasons to justify the writing of a county bikeway/walkway plan. With a growing emphasis on fitness and health, more and more people have begun exercising regularly (According to a survey, the Bicycle Federation has estimated that in 1984 more than 75 million Americans rode bicycles and 1.6 million commuted to work by bicycle). Montgomery County, with its natural beauty and rural character provides an almost ideal location for bicyclists. Due to the County's growing population and increased commercial growth however, many citizens are finding that some roads have become too dangerous from increased traffic. While

recreational bicycling can easily be accommodated in the rural portions of the County, residents who are interested in safely traveling between Blacksburg, Christiansburg, or Radford by foot discover that this is no longer possible. A good bicycle/pedestrian plan works to encourage the development of lanes and trails where they are needed to provide safe routes for non-motorized travel.

While providing safe routes is one of the most important goals of a bikeway/walkway plan, there are also several other reasons. The encouragement of commuting to work by bicycle reduces traffic along overcrowded roads, reduces air and noise pollution, and helps save natural resources. A plan can foster cooperation with other localities by extending existing town routes into the County and can encourage economic development by promoting regional "bike rides". And lastly, a major purpose of a bike plan is to save county money. By encouraging lanes and trails only where they are needed and by taking into account alternative funding sources, a bike plan guides decision makers in the efficient funding and development of biking/walking routes.

All photos included in the
1990 Bikeway/Walkway Plan
are by Bill Edmonds.

Note: This plan has been carried over from the 1990 Comprehensive Plan without update or change.

Process

In April 1989, the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution requesting that a bike plan be written as part of the revision of the Comprehensive Plan. A committee of county citizens and representatives from related groups was formed and began meeting in September 1989.

Any interested citizen was welcome to participate in this group. Some active members included representatives from: the Town of Christiansburg, the Blacksburg Bikeway/Walkway Committee, the Virginia Tech Civil Engineering Society, and the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Commission. The committee met approximately twice a month for several months developing the county bike map. The plan was written with a ten year time span but it was recommended that it be reviewed every five years.

The plan was also written with a regional perspective. Recommendations from the Blacksburg plan were included and several routes designated in Montgomery County could easily be extended into neighboring counties. Input was also received from the Mountain Valleys Bike Path Committee which is studying a bike link between Roanoke's Explore Project and Montgomery County..

To publicize the plan and to receive citizen input, the Bikeway/Walkway Draft Map was presented and discussed at four county comprehensive plan citizen meetings held in February of 1990. During these meetings comments were received on the plan and were brought back to the full committee for review.

Goals

This plan seeks:

- To encourage a lesser dependency on cars as a form of transportation and to increase bicycle use as a mode of transportation.
- To help preserve the natural and scenic environment of the County. To take full advantage of all available grant money.
- To provide safe connecting routes between Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and other localities.
- To help educate the public on safe bicycling practices and on courtesy among drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- To help promote coordination and cooperation among local governments.
- To expand the County's recreational facilities by providing on and off road hiking and biking trails.
- To provide safe biking/walking lanes where they are appropriate such as to schools, population centers, or parks.

Funding Sources

In developing and prioritizing proposed bike routes, the Bikeway/Walkway Committee carefully considered the costs involved. It was felt that if the plan's recommendations were expensive, they would not be funded. Therefore, many of the proposed routes are designated as "shared roads". For these routes, the committee felt that the current road was safe for cyclists and that it should only be marked with signs to designate the road as a bike route (the State would possibly fund these signs).

Other proposed routes were designated as either "lanes" or "trails". All roads recommended for lanes were coordinated with the Virginia Department of Transportation's Six-Year Road Plan with the intention that bike lanes would be constructed when regular road improvements occurred. This is the most cost effective way to fund bike lanes and can be done incrementally as roads are improved. It is estimated that lanes developed independent of VDOT road improvements cost approximately twice as much as projects completed when road improvements occur.

The funding of trails (off road routes) was only recommended where lanes were not feasible. These routes were only proposed near existing or future parks so that state grants would apply. The following grants apply to bikeways/walkways:

Development of Routes

The following factors for bikeway/walkway routes were considered:

Population Centers:

According to the Center for Public Service Montgomery County is the fastest growing locality in Southwest Virginia. Between 1980 and 1988, Montgomery County grew by 3,715 people while Roanoke County's population increased by only 2,555 people. A population increase also results in an increase of new housing units, subdivisions, mobile home parks, and services needed to accommodate the population. Traffic also increases and roads become dangerous for non-motorized travel.

To serve this increasing population, county growth areas were identified as locations that should be served by biking/walking routes. These locations have experienced an increase in housing through subdivisions, mobile home parks, or by a large number of single family homes. Areas considered to be "growth centers" included: Bethel, Ellett Valley, Elliston/Lafayette, Ironto, Laurel Ridge, Mt. Tabor Road, Plum Creek, Preston Forest, Prices Fork, Riner, and Shawsville.

Commuter Links:

Montgomery County currently has two major commuter links between Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Radford. US Route 460 between Blacksburg and Christiansburg is the most direct route for travel between these two towns. This strip of road also provides access to the New River Valley mall, the Market Place Shopping Center, Mid-county Park, and various other businesses. Route 114 between Christiansburg and the Montgomery County Line has also experienced development and growth. This road serves subdivisions, mobile home parks, one elementary school, and a growing number of businesses. This road also serves as a direct link between Christiansburg and Radford.

Both of these roads suffer from a lack of good shoulders, high-speeding cars, and congestion. These dangerous conditions make these popular roads inaccessible to walkers and bikers.

Parks:

Recreational facilities should be easily accessible by foot or bicycle. Existing parks addressed in this study included: Mid-County Park located off US Route 460, Plum Creek Park located off of Radford Rd (Rt 11), the '76 Bikeway, McCoy

Bikeway/Walkway Grant Programs

Type of Grant	Source	Program Description	Qualifying Route
VA Outdoors Grant	Department of Conservation & Recreation	50% grants for parks involving water and/or projects with a county-wide focus	Huckleberry Trail (promote as a linear park)
Recreational Access Roads	Department of Conservation & Recreation	Funds to construct, maintain, & improve access roads & bike trails in historical or recreational areas	Huckleberry Trail, 114 to proposed New River Park, connector Trail from Huckleberry to Mid-County Park
Virginia's Orphaned Land Program	Department of Mines, Minerals, & Energy	For reclamation of land which is hazardous or an attractive nuisance due to surface mining	Huckleberry Trail in the Merrimac area

motorized vehicles. It usually contains a separate right-of-way from those facilities used by other modes of transportation. The path should have a minimum width of five feet and should be paved. (Example: Huckleberry Trail in Blacksburg)

Lane: A portion of the roadway that has been designated for the exclusive use of bicycle travel with a minimum width of four feet. (Example: bike lanes in Blacksburg)

Shared Road: This is a bike path that shares the right-of-way with motor vehicles, or where a bicycle path is not designated except by signs. (Example: current '76 bike path)

#1 Project: Refers to the abandoned Huckleberry railroad bed. Due to the ideal location of this route (paralleling Rt 460 between Blacksburg and Christiansburg) and since most of the route is owned by the County, this is recommended to be cleared and paved as a trail. This project is also the #1 recommendation of the Blacksburg Bike Plan.

High Priority: A project that is recommended to be completed within the next one to five years.

Medium Priority: A project that is recommended to be completed within the next five to nine years.

Future Routes: A Project that is recommended to be completed beyond ten years.

Falls, Pandapas Pond, and the nearby Blue Ridge Parkway. Proposed Parks considered in this study included: New River Park located at Peppers Ferry on Route 114 and Little River Park in the southwestern portion of the county.

Other

Recommendations from the Blacksburg Bikeway/Walkway Plan were considered and where appropriate included into the County Plan. Popular, scenic biking routes throughout the County were also evaluated and considered for inclusion in the plan.

Definitions

Trail: A separate path which is for the exclusive use of non-

Summary of Routes

St. Rt/Name	Designation	Priority	Justification
Huckleberry Line	Trail	#1 Project	Co-owned right-of-way, good commuter route, also #1 Blacksburg project.
Mid County Park/ Park Connections	Lane/Trail	High	Link Mid County Park to Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Huckleberry Trail.
Lusters Gate Road (Rte 723 to Rte 603)	Lane	High	'76 Bike Route, VDoT 6-Year Plan: August 1990, & serve growing area of County.
Prices Fork Road (Rte 685)	Lane	High	VDoT 6-Year Plan: June 1991 & link from Blacksburg to Coal Hollow Road.
Coal Hollow Road (Rte 705)	Lane	High	VDoT 6-Year Plan: December 1994 & link from Prices Fork Rd. to Peppers Ferry Rd.
North Fork Road (Rte 603)	?	Medium	VDoT 6-Year Plan:? Scenic popular biking route, waiting on road recommendations.
Yellow Sulphur Rd. (Rte 643)	Lane	Medium	VDoT 6-Year Plan: November 1996 & link between Blacksburg and Christiansburg.
Ellett Rd. (Rte 723 from 603 to	Lane	Medium	VDoT 6-Year Plan: January 1997 and link between Blacksburg and Christiansburg
Mt. Tabor Rd. (Rte 624 to Rte 628)	Lane	Medium	VDoT 6-Year Plan: January 1999, Scenic & Popular Bike Route
Peppers Ferry Rd. (Rte 114)	Trail	Medium	Link from Coal Hollow Road to proposed New River Park, traffic conditions require off-road trail.

Future Routes

St. Rt/Name	Designation	Priority	Justification
Pandapas Pond Rd. (US 460)	Trail	Future	Recommendation in Blacksburg Plan, serve Pandapas Pond
Craig Creek Rd. (Rte 621)	Lane	Future	Serve Northern portion of County including the Jefferson National Forest
Thomas Lane (Rte 737)	Lane	Future	VDoT 6-Year Plan: 1999, serve growing subdivisions and link to Prices Fork Rd.
Pilot Rd. (Rte 615)	Lane	Future	Pave with lanes as road is widened to link Christiansburg to designated shared roadway.
Nellies Cave Rd. (Rte 681)	Lane	Future	Pave with lanes when road is paved. Provides a direct link from Ellett Valley to Blacksburg.

Detailed Description of Routes

The following list of routes are addressed in detail in this plan. It is recommended that these routes be funded as Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road improvements occur. Proposed lanes should be constructed to VDOT standards. While specific costs have not been addressed in this plan, it is estimated that one mile of paved lanes would cost \$30,000 if completed when road improvements occur. This figure would increase to approximately \$50,000 per mile if completed independent of VDOT improvements.

Shared Roads

Due to low traffic counts and the rural nature of these roads, the following have been recommended as shared roads (map is included with plan):

- Alleghany Spring Road (St Rte 637)
- Big Falls Road (St Rte 635)
- Bradshaw Road (St Rte 629)
- Catawba Road (St Rte 809)
- Childress Road (St Rte 693)
- Dry Run Road (St Rte 787)
- Fairview Church Road (St Rte 669)
- Fire Tower Road (St Rte 600)
- Glade Road (St Rte 693)
- Graysontown Road (St Rte 693)
- High Rock Hill Road (St Rte 612)
- Indian Valley Road (St Rte 787)
- Lick Run Road (St Rte 781)
- Lovely Mount Drive (St Rte 664)
- McCoy Road (St Rte 652)
- Merrimac Road (St Rte 657)
- Mt. Tabor Road (St Rte 624) to Dry Run Road (St Rte 628)
- Mt. Zion Road (St Rte 655)
- Mud Pike (St Rte 666)
- Norris Run Road (St Rte 708)
- North Fork Road (St Rte 603)
- Old Pike Road (St Rte 615)
- Pilot Road (St Rte 615)
- Piney Woods Road (St Rte 600)
- Riner Road (St Rte 8)
- Roanoke Road (US Rte 11/460)
- Tyler Road (St Rte 177)
- Union Valley Road (St Rte 669)
- Walton Road (St Rte 663)
- Wintergreen Drive (St Rte 787)

Huckleberry Trail

PRIORITY: #1 Project

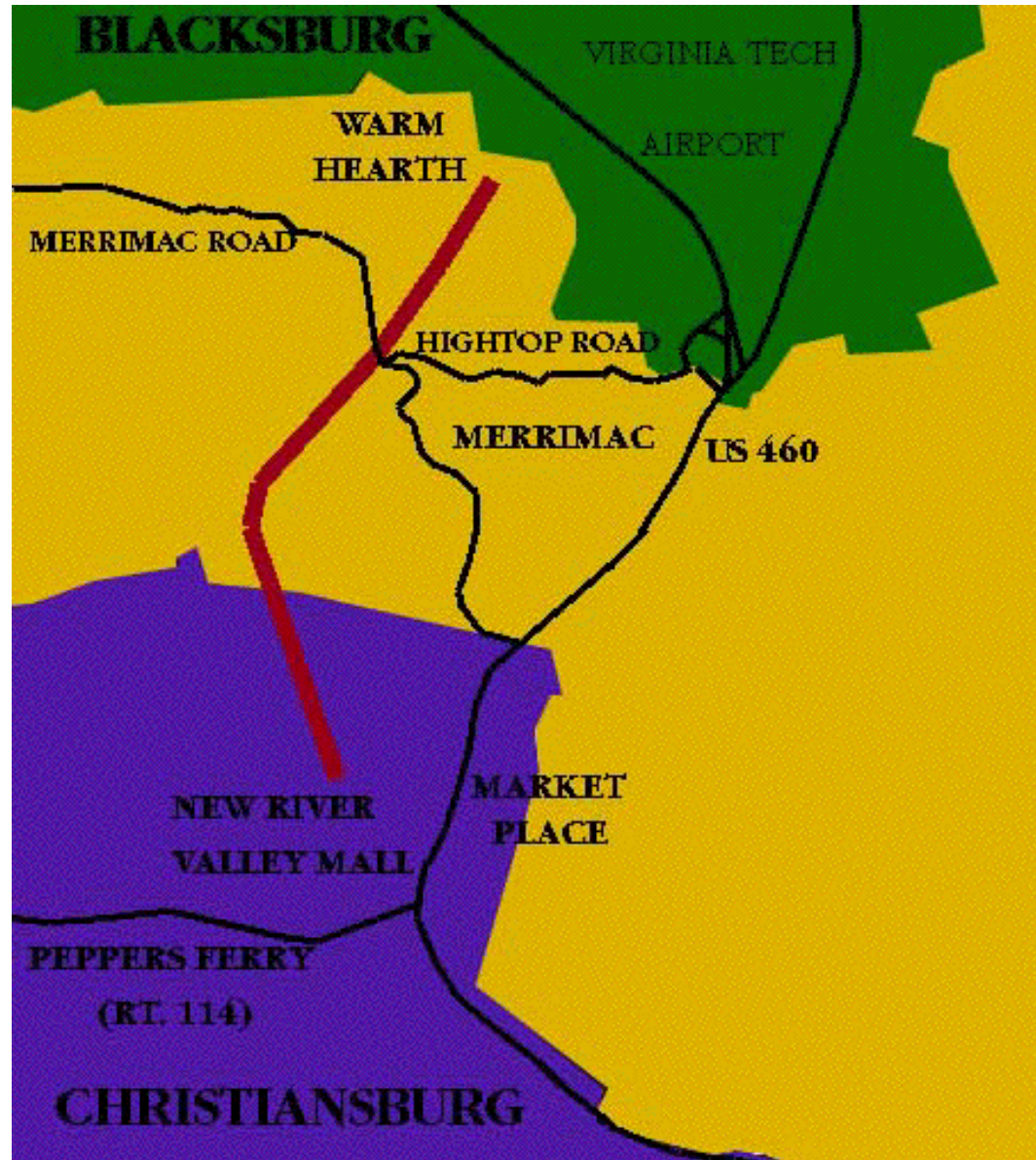
DESIGNATION: Trail

Description: Beginning near the entrance to Warm Hearth Retirement Village, and extending to the corporate limits of Christiansburg, this project would convert the county-owned, abandoned Norfolk and Western railroad line to an off-road trail.

Funding Source: If promoted as a linear park, this trail would qualify for Virginia Outdoors Grant funding. Since the land is currently owned by the County, land acquisition is unnecessary, making this project economically feasible. Various civic organizations have also volunteered their services to help clear the right-of-way.

Traffic Counts: 32,925 along South Main Street (US Rte 460, 1988 figures).

Justification: The Huckleberry Trail is a historic, abandoned railroad right-of-way that originally extended between Blacksburg and Christiansburg. This trail would follow the old railroad line and would create a linear park parallel to US 460. The route would serve as a commuter link between Blacksburg and Christiansburg and would provide access to Mid-County Park. While the County's portion of this route would end at the town limits of Christiansburg, it is recommended that Christiansburg investigate continuing this trail to the New River Valley Mall. The Blacksburg Bikeway Plan also ranks this project as #1 and recommends that it be extended from Blacksburg to the County.



Mid-County Park Connection:

PRIORITY: High

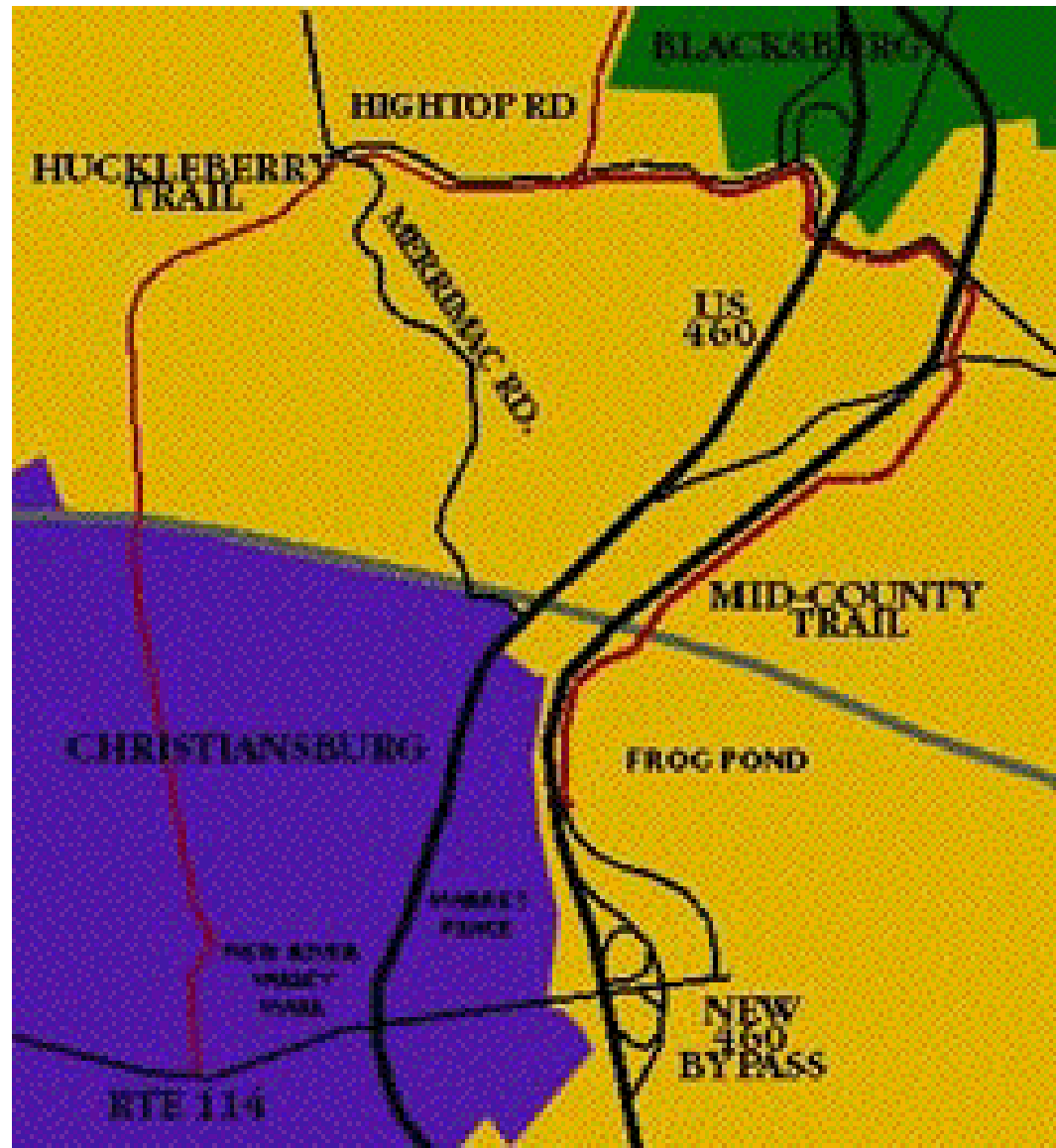
DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes, Trails

DESCRIPTION: This system of bike lanes and trails will provide bicycle/pedestrian access to the Montgomery County Park from Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and the Huckleberry Trail. This system consists of several segments (listed below) that will be incorporated into the design and construction of the future Route 460 Bypass (Route 3A).

Bike lanes along the 3A Service Road from the entrance to the Montgomery County Park north to Jennelle Road; Bike lanes along the revised alignments of Yellow Sulphur and Hightop Roads; A bike trail on VDOT right-of-way to connect the bike lanes on the service road (above) and those on the realigned portion of Yellow Sulphur Road; A bikeway/walkway bridge across Route 3A; A bikeway/walkway connection between the bridge over Route 3A and Route 460 via Pear Street (bike lanes), and existing public right-of-way (trail), and a strip of land owned by Montgomery County (trail); A bike trail between the bridge over Route 3A and Arbor Drive; Bike lanes along Hightop Road from the realigned portion to the intersection with the Huckleberry Trail.

FUNDING SOURCES: All but the last segment will be incorporated into the construction cost for Route 3A. The bike lanes along Hightop Road from the realigned portion to the Huckleberry Trail will be funded through VDOT's Recreational Access program.

JUSTIFICATION: Without these facilities, access to the park by bicycle or foot travel will be very difficult and potentially dangerous. This system will also provide a bicycle route from Blacksburg to the Marketplace shopping area.



Lusters Gate Road

PRIORITY: High

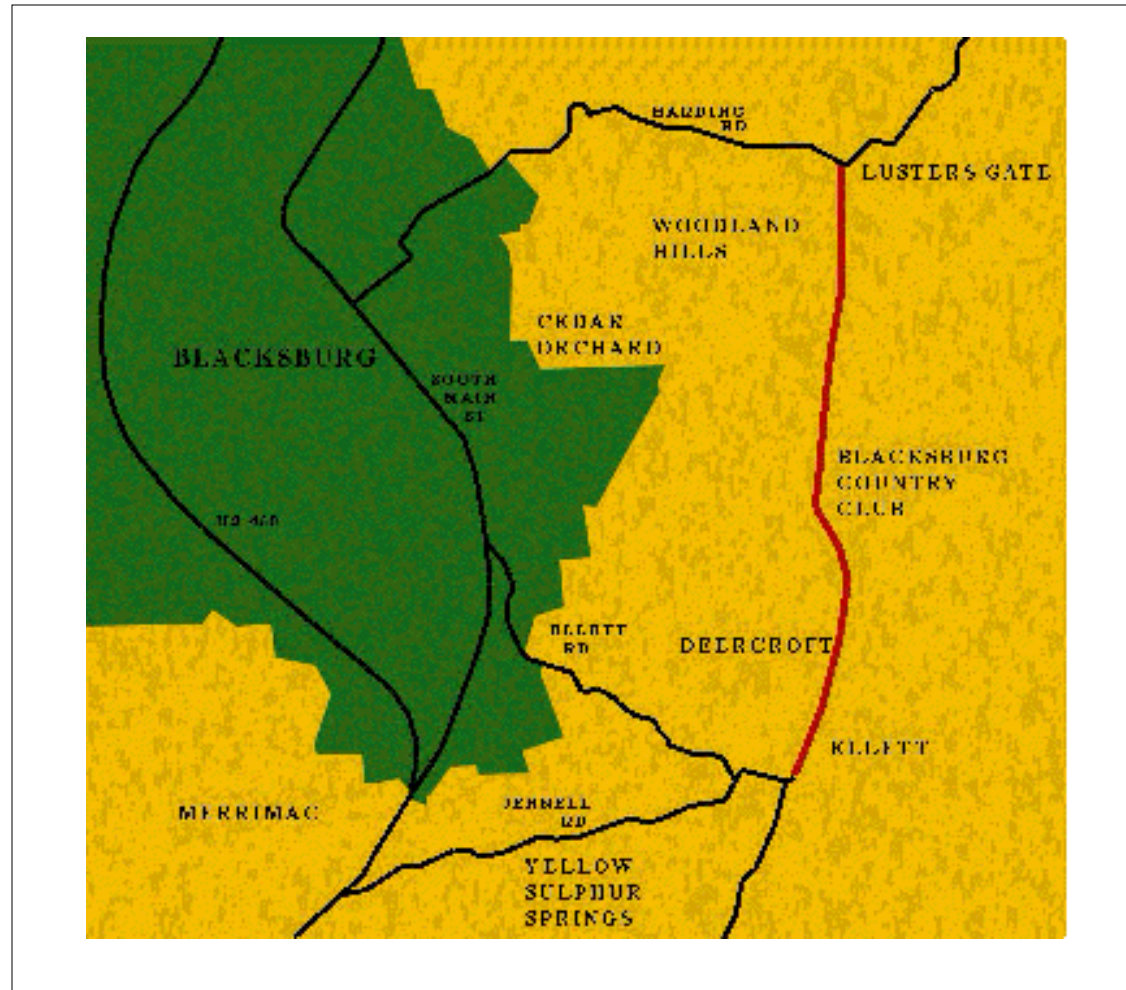
DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes

DESCRIPTION: Lusters Gate Road (St Rte 723) beginning at intersection with Catawba Road (St Rte 785) and ending at intersection with North Fork Road (St Rte 603).

FUNDING SOURCE: Road is scheduled to be widened by Virginia Department of Transportation on August 1990. State will fund 100% of cost if done when road is widened.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: Range from 477 average daily traffic to 1,375 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This will serve a growing number of residential subdivisions (including Woodland Hills, Deercroft, and Blacksburg Country Club Estates) in the county. This route is also part of the '76 Bicentennial TransAmerica Trail and serves as a link between Blacksburg and Christiansburg.



Prices Fork Road

PRIORITY: High

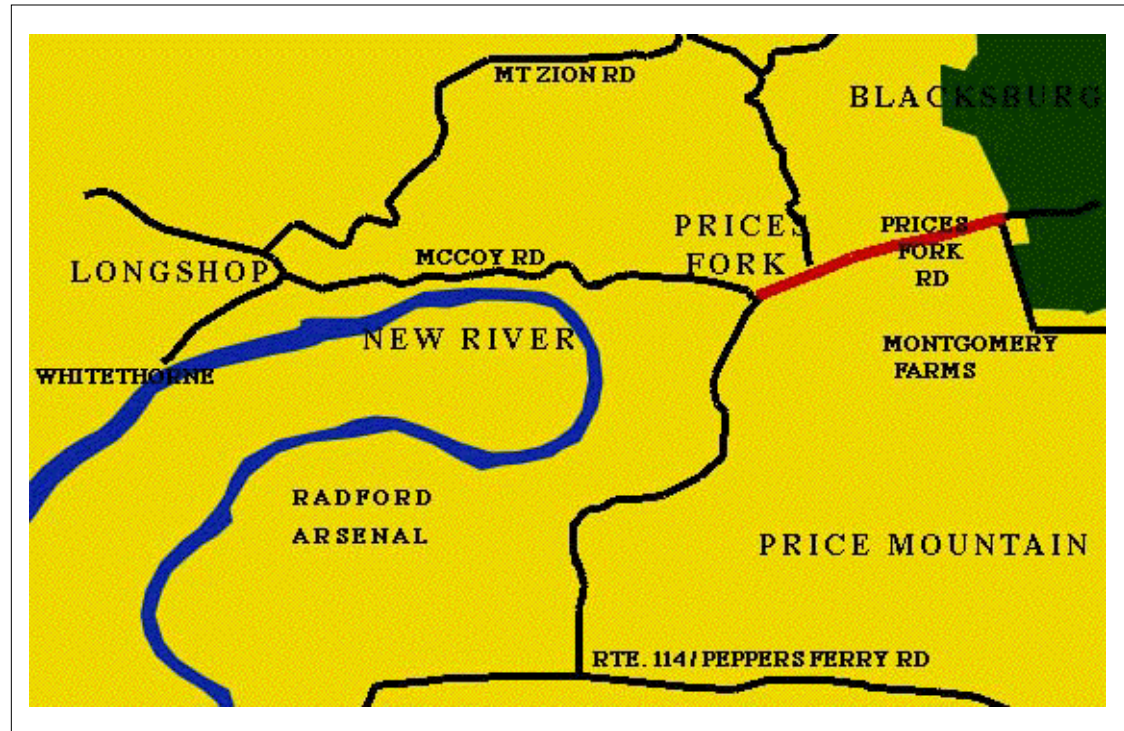
DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes

DESCRIPTION: Prices Fork Road (St Rte 685) beginning at the town limits of Blacksburg and extending 1.68 miles to Tucker Road (St Rte 736).

FUNDING SOURCE: Road is scheduled to be widened by the Virginia Department of Transportation in June 1991. The State will fund 50% of the cost if work is done when the road is widened.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: Range from 7,047 average daily traffic to 4,663 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This route will serve a growing number of subdivisions (Montgomery Farms, Phillips Acres, and the proposed Sterling manor) in the county. This route also serves Prices Fork Elementary School, provides the most direct link between Blacksburg and Radford and is a popular biking route between Blacksburg and the New River. This road currently receives a large volume of high speed traffic which makes walking or biking very dangerous and almost impossible. The town of Blacksburg currently has bike lanes extending to the town limits. These proposed lanes would be a logical extension into the County.



Coal Hollow Road (Prices Fork/ Peppers Ferry Connector):

PRIORITY: High

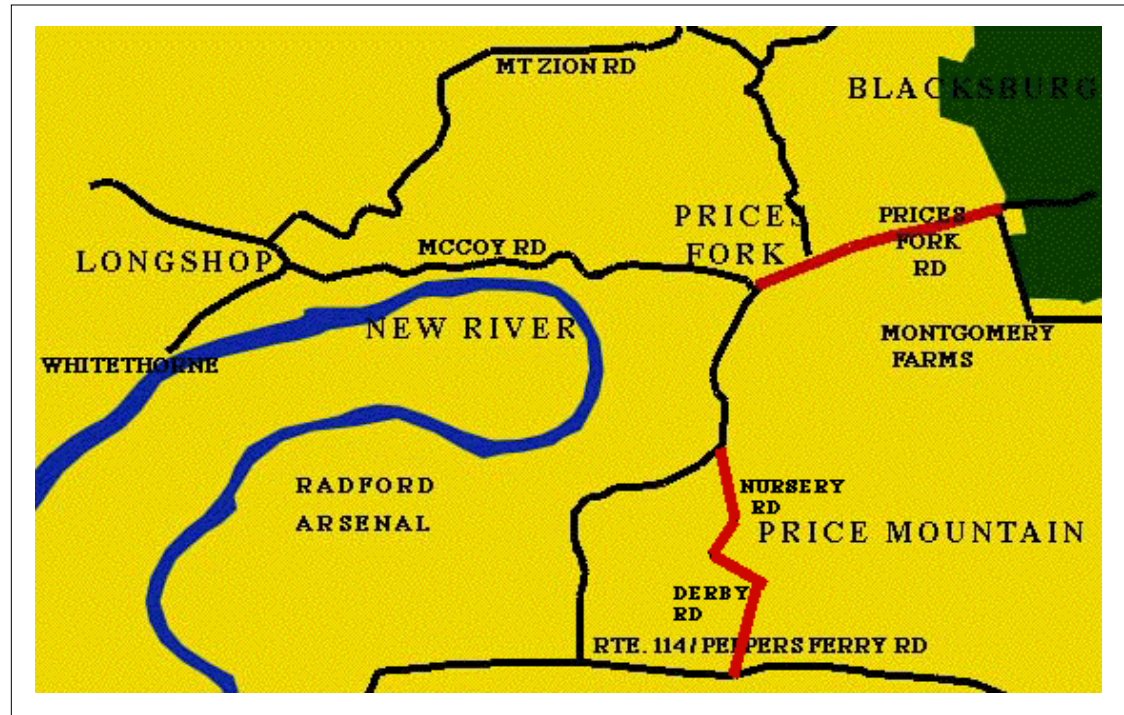
DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes

DESCRIPTION: Coal Hollow Road (St Rte 705) beginning at Peppers Ferry Road (St Rte 114) and extending 1.95 miles to Prices Fork Road (St Rte 659).

FUNDING SOURCE: Road is scheduled to be widened by the Virginia Department of Transportation in December 1994. The State will fund 50% of the cost if work is done when the road is improved.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: Range from 97 average daily traffic to 93 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This route will connect the "Prices Fork Route" (discussed on page 16) to Peppers Ferry Road. Prices Fork Road near the intersection with Peppers Ferry Road is currently hilly, narrow, curvy, and too dangerous for bicyclists. There are also no plans to widen or improve this section of the road. The placement of lanes along Coal Hollow Road would allow for cyclists to have a safe route to travel between Blacksburg and Peppers Ferry Road. This would help promote non-motorized travel for commuting purposes. Improvements to this road will greatly increase traffic (and development) along this road - making lanes even more necessary.



North Fork Rd.:

PRIORITY: Medium

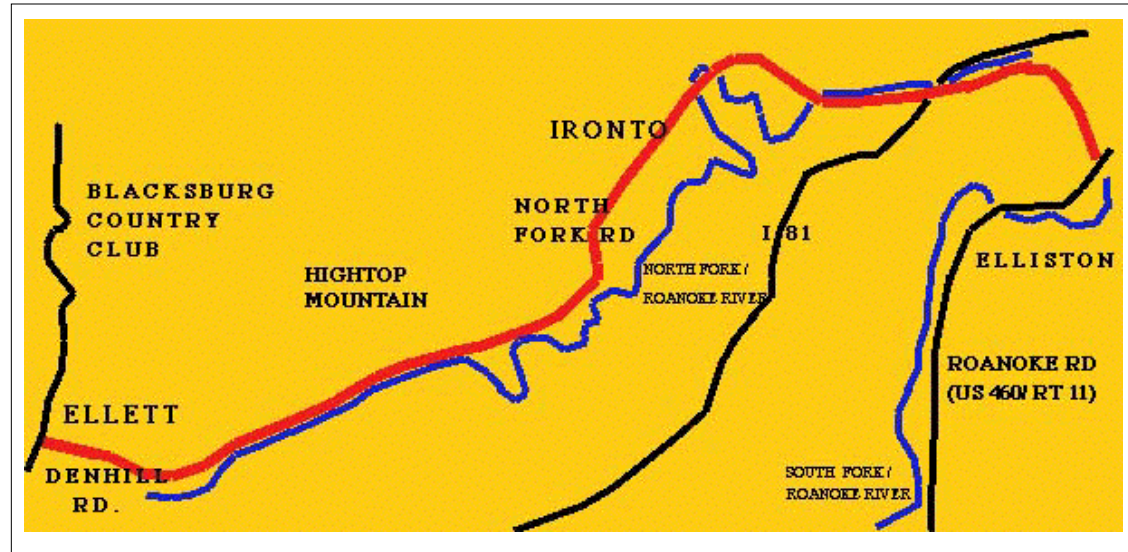
DESIGNATION: No Designation

DESCRIPTION: North Fork/Den Hill Road (St Rte 603) beginning at intersection with Lusters Gate Road (St Rte 723) and extending to Roanoke Road (US Rte 11/460).

FUNDING SOURCE: The State would fund 50% of this route when the road is improved and widened.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: Range from 674 average daily traffic to 1,002 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION This is a very popular biking route that would connect to Ellett Valley Route #1 and Ellett Valley Route #2. This route would provide a safe, easy connector from Blacksburg and Christiansburg close to the Roanoke County Line. To date, the status of this road is questionable due to the proposed Blacksburg to Roanoke link. If this road were to remain undisturbed, the route could continue as a shared roadway. If however, the road were widened, improved lanes or trails would then be necessary along this road.



Yellow Sulphur Springs:

ROUTE NAME: Yellow Sulphur Route

PRIORITY: Medium

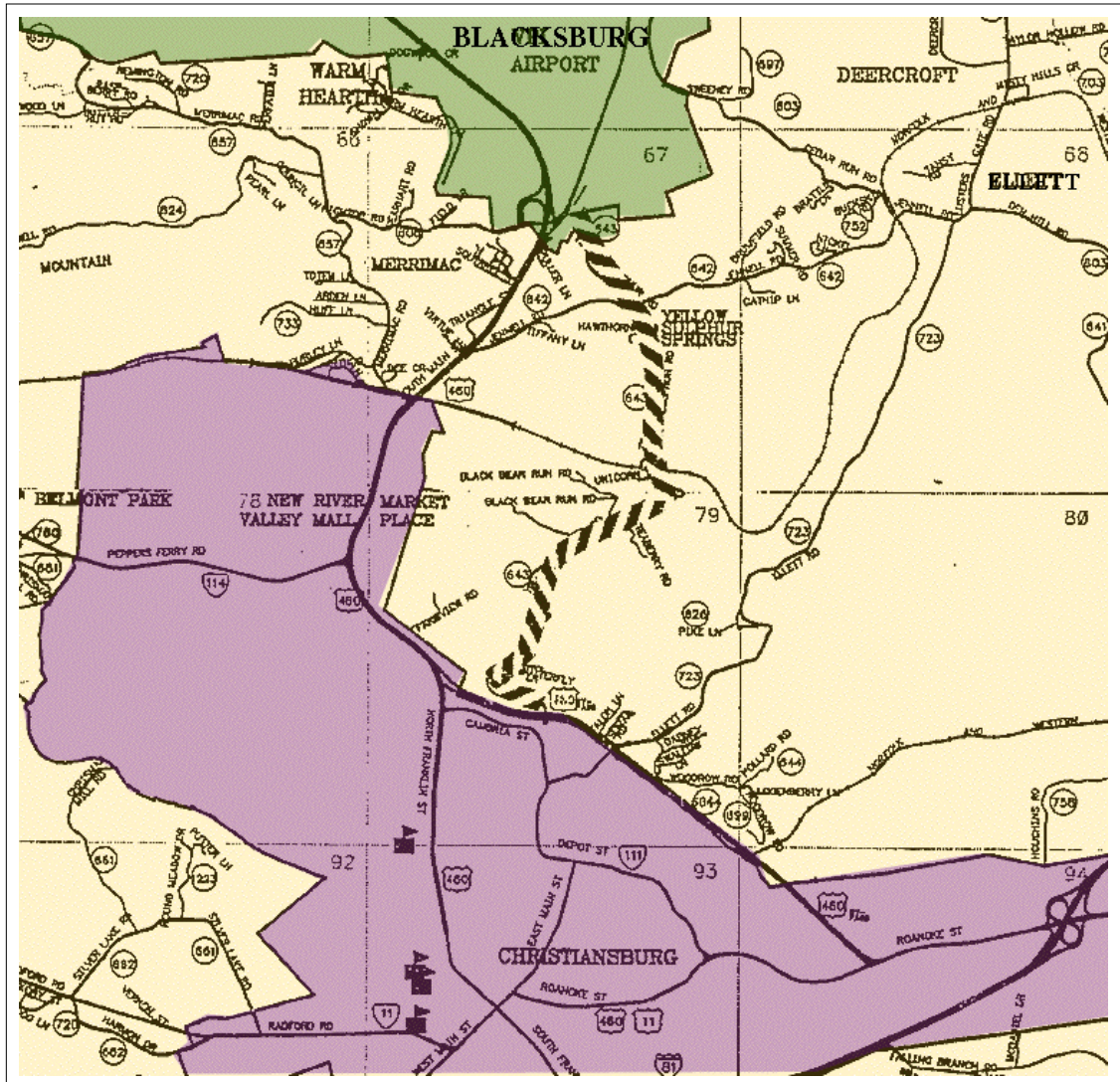
DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes

DESCRIPTION: Yellow Sulphur road (St Rte 643) beginning one mile north of the corporate limits of the town of Christiansburg to the intersection with Jenelle Road (St Rte 642).

FUNDING SOURCE: Road is scheduled to be widened and improved by the Virginia Department of Transportation in November 1996. State will fund 50% of the cost if done when road improvements occur.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: 145 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This road serves a growing area of Montgomery County. It is also a direct link between the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg. Yellow Sulphur Road is a winding, curvy road which is not safe for bikers or walkers without lanes. Improvements to this road will greatly increase traffic, making lanes even more necessary.



Ellett Rd.:

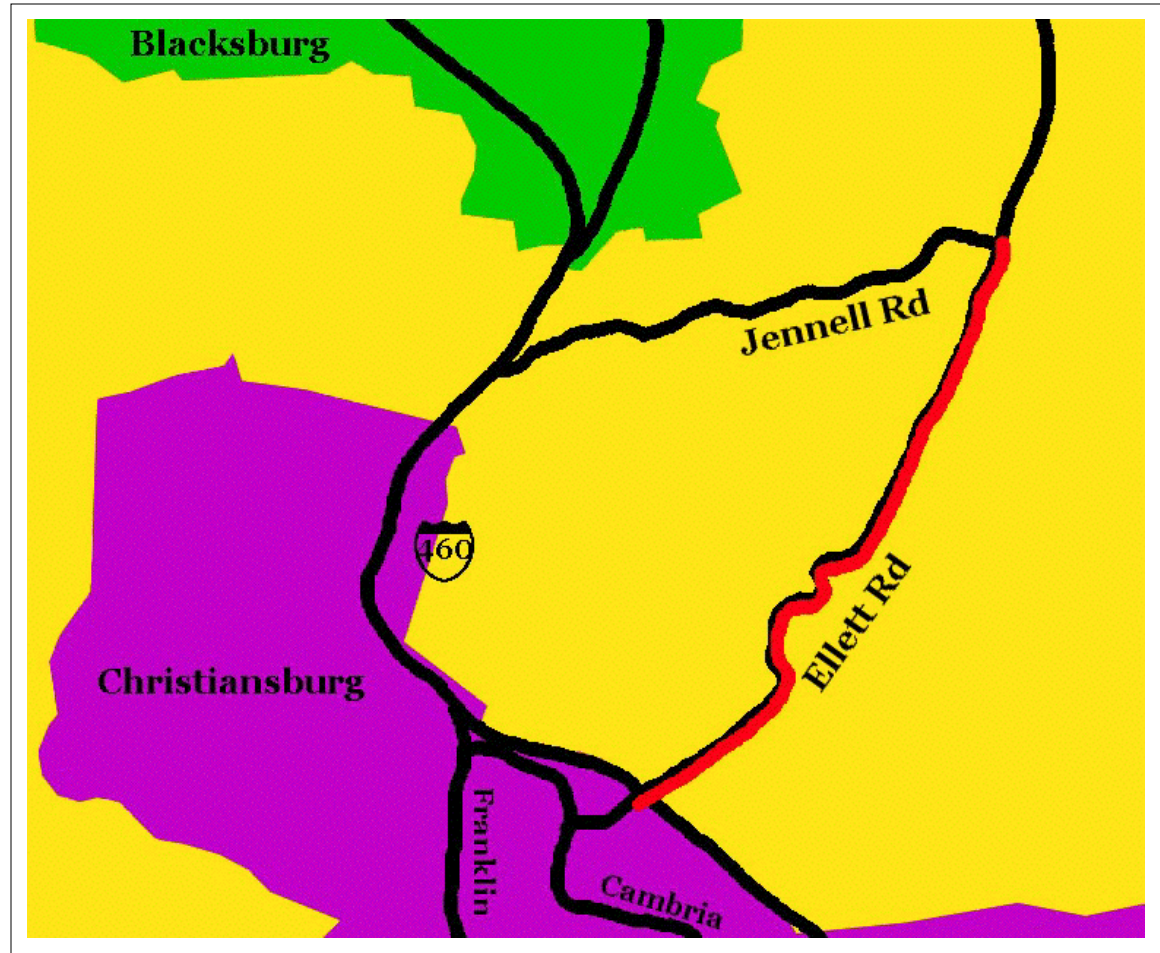
PRIORITY: Medium

DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes

FUNDING SOURCE: Road is scheduled to be widened by the Virginia Department of Transportation in January 1997. State will fund 100% of the cost if done when road is widened.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: Range from 1,229 average daily traffic to 641 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This route is part of the '76 Bicentennial TransAmerica Trail and connects "Ellett Valley Route #1" (discussed on page 15 of this report) to the corporate limits of Christiansburg. This route is both a scenic, popular bike ride and also a good commuter link between Blacksburg and Christiansburg.



Mt. Tabor Rd.:

PRIORITY: Medium

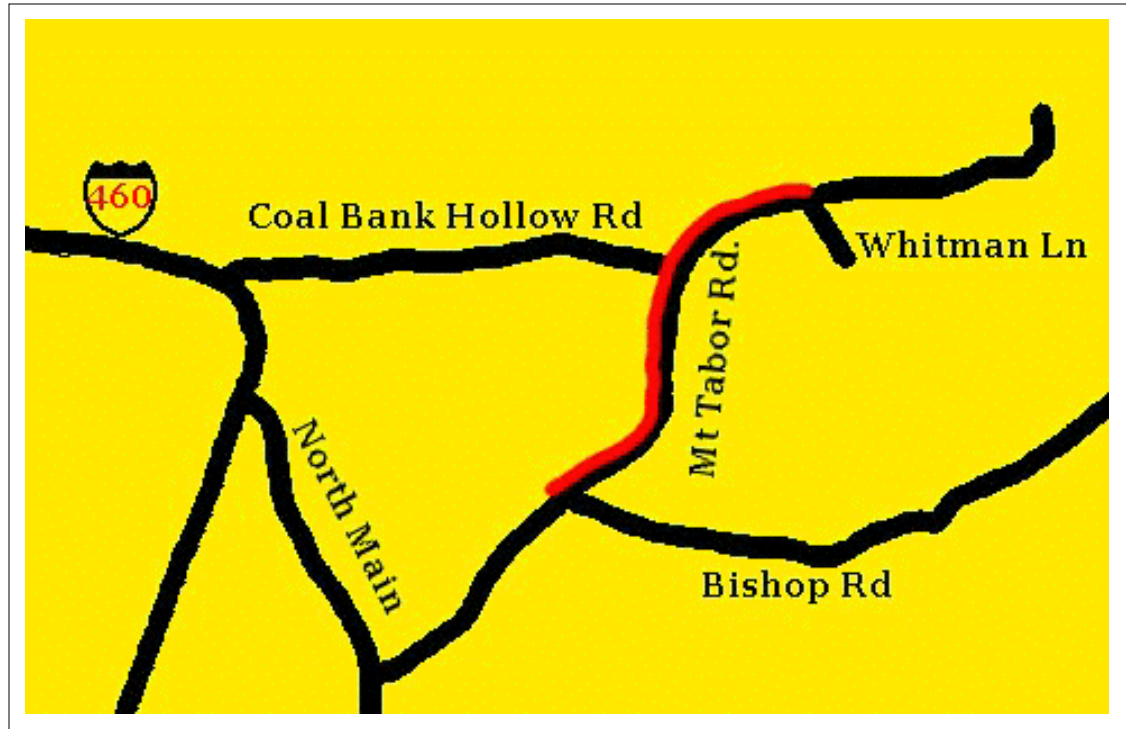
DESIGNATION: Paved Lanes

DESCRIPTION: Mt. Tabor Road (St Rte 624) beginning from the corporate limits of Blacksburg and extending one mile east of Preston Forest Drive (St Rte 806).

FUNDING SOURCE: This road is scheduled to be widened and improved by the Virginia Department of Transportation in January 1999. The State would fund 50% of these lanes if the work is completed when the road is improved.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: Range from 513 average daily traffic to 1,056 average daily traffic (1987 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This bike route would serve several subdivisions (Indian Run, Preston Forest, Mt. Tabor Village, Blacksburg's Woodbine) and a large school/day care facility. Currently, the narrow, windy road is dangerous for bikers or walkers because of the heavy traffic generated from the subdivisions. These paved lanes would extend beyond Preston Forest serving the heavily populated area of the road but the route would continue beyond this as a shared roadway. This bike route is a popular route that extends into Roanoke County.



Peppers Ferry Rd.:

PRIORITY: Medium

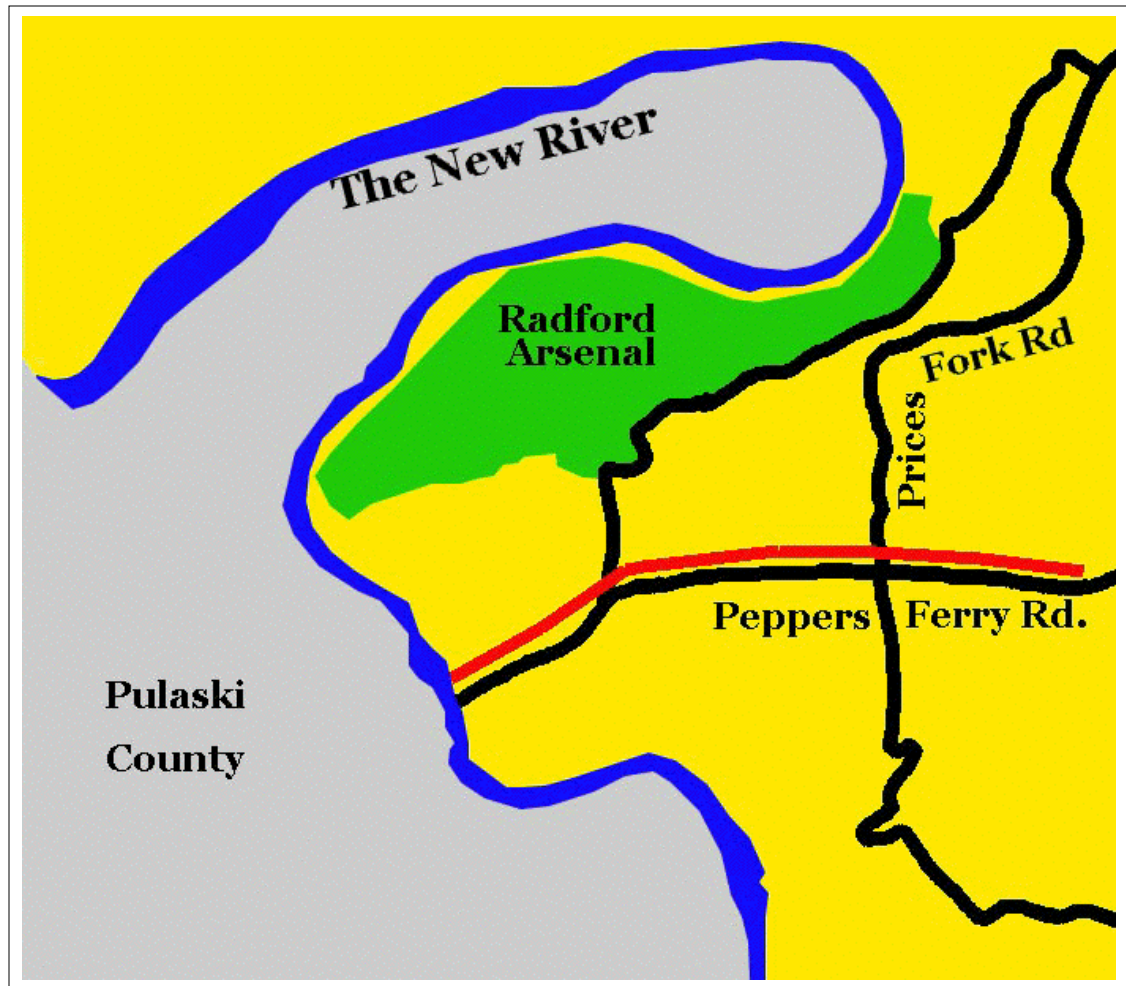
DESIGNATION: Trail

DESCRIPTION: Located parallel to Peppers Ferry Road (Rte 114) beginning at intersection with Coal Hollow Road (St Rte 705) and extending to proposed New River park at Montgomery County line.

FUNDING SOURCE: This route would connect an established biking/walking route (Prices Fork Route and Prices Fork/Peppers Ferry Connector) to New River park, qualifying it for State Recreational Access Funds.

TRAFFIC COUNTS: 10,645 average daily traffic (1988 figures).

JUSTIFICATION: This trail would connect a proposed bike route (Prices Fork Route and Prices Fork/Peppers Ferry Connector) to New River park and would also serve as a commuter link from Blacksburg to Radford. Currently, Peppers Ferry Road is too dangerous for non-motorized travel. Future plans indicate that this road may be widened to four lanes making biking or walking impossible along Peppers Ferry Road without an off-road trail.



Recommendations

To pursue and implement successful bikeways in Montgomery County, the following actions should occur:

1. The recommended routes discussed in section X of this plan should be funded and implemented as VDOT road improvements occur. If the funding for road improvements changes, the timing of the bikeways/walkways should also change to correspond.
2. The recommended trails discussed in section X of this plan should be funded in a timely manner. It is suggested that grant money be pursued as soon as possible.
3. The proposed county shared roads should be marked with signs. These could possibly be funded by the state.
4. A regional committee should be appointed to coordinate and implement bikeways. Members on this group could include representatives from Montgomery County, Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, and interested civic organizations (Virginia Tech's Civil Engineering Society). This group would coordinate the development of new routes and trails; promote bicycling in the area; pursue funding options; update the bike plan; and undertake any other function to promote and develop bikeways/walkways in Montgomery County and the New River Valley.
5. A county or regional bicycle map should be developed. This map would illustrate and discuss various routes for biking in the county. Items that could be included on this map would be the different types of routes, points of interest along each route, the route's degree of difficulty, eating and lodging establishments, and other related information. This pamphlet could be distributed to chambers of commerce or bicycle clubs around the state and could promote this area for regional bicycling.
6. Bike safety programs - both for children and adults, bikers and drivers - should be supported and encouraged. This could be accomplished through the schools (including local universities), through recreational programs, or through drivers education.
7. A maintenance program needs to be developed to address the upkeep of bikeways/walkways. Often bike lanes become depositories for snow, leaves, litter, or other debris. To ensure safe bike paths, these routes need to be regularly cleaned and maintained.
8. To ensure that this plan remains current, this document should be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
9. Investigate revising the subdivision ordinance to require the dedication and development of biking/walking trails in large subdivisions.

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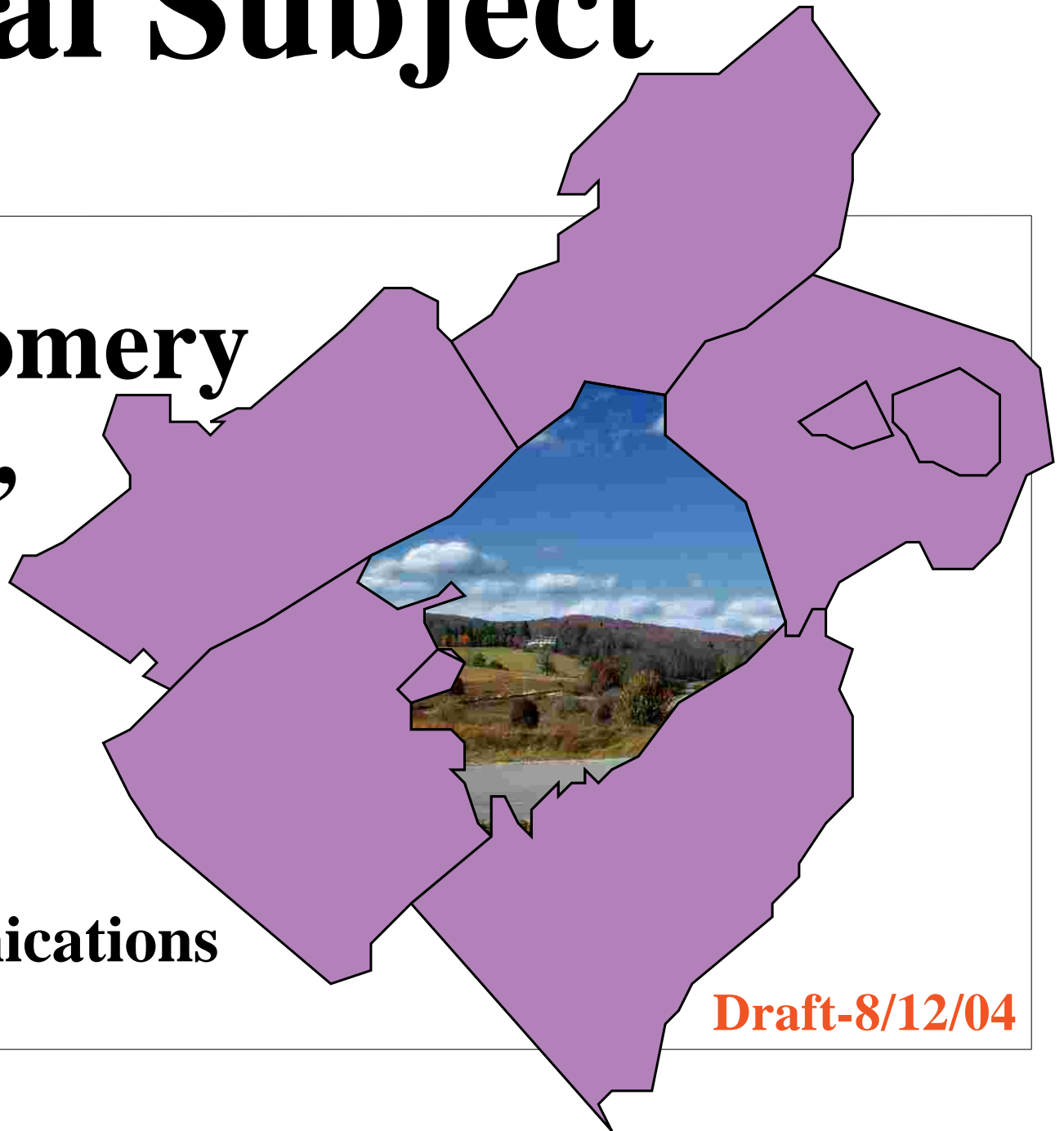
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Special Subject Plans

**Montgomery
County,
2025**

**Regional
Approach to
Telecommunications
Towers**



Draft-8/12/04

Regional Approach to Telecommunication Towers

Introduction

On July 24, 2000 the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution requesting that the planning staff work with the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg to develop a consistent approach towards analyzing and processing telecommunication tower siting requests from a land use perspective.

The staff committee, consisting of staff members from Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, Pulaski and Montgomery Counties met on several occasions and discussed how to develop a regional approach to the telecommunication towers issues. The committee has put together the following items for consideration by the respective Planning Commissions and governing bodies for inclusion in each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan. While each jurisdiction is unique in its makeup and citizens, the committee agreed that the following items are consistent with the each jurisdiction's goals to help develop a uniform approach toward analyzing and processing telecommunication tower siting requests from a land use perspective.

Note: This plan has been carried over from the 1990 Comprehensive Plan without update or change.

The key items that are addressed in this proposal include:

1. Uniform definition and approach to co-location
2. Uniform and consistent notification procedures
3. Uniform approach to siting of new towers
4. Uniform mapping of tower sites
5. Consistent use of consultants to assist jurisdiction in review of requests

1. Uniform Definition and Approach to Co-Location

Co-location refers to the siting of new antennae, microwave dishes, etc. on existing structures. This allows for the "highest and best" use of existing structures and sites that could eliminate the need for construction of a new tower structure in an inappropriate area. Potential sites that provide co-location possibilities include but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Existing communication towers
- B. Buildings (schools, police stations, fire departments, businesses, etc.)
- C. Water tanks, sewer and water treatment facilities
- D. Electric transmission towers
- E. Signs (including pylons, billboards, etc.)
- F. Parks and ball fields
- G. Industrial parks

The Counties of Montgomery and Pulaski, City of Radford and Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg encourage the above type of co-location efforts when placing wireless communication devices in their localities.

2. Uniform and Consistent Notification Procedures

Notification of intent to construct a communication facility refers to the written notification required for public hearings pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the VA Code. In addition, the Counties of Montgomery and Pulaski, City of Radford and Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg have agreed to provide written notification to the Planning Commission of each jurisdiction upon receipt of a request for a new communication facility to allow for review and input from neighboring jurisdictions. Comments received from each jurisdiction

will be considered by the jurisdiction having authority over the request during their public hearing process.

3. Uniform approach to siting of new towers

Siting of new communication towers in a jurisdiction should be reviewed for their potential effects on surrounding jurisdictions as well as the jurisdiction in which the structure is to be located. Newly constructed towers should be built in locations that will provide the least negative impact to the citizens of each jurisdiction. Montgomery County encourages the use of monopole and/or "stealth towers" for new sites that require new construction or "new builds". The following locations are listed from most to least preferable when considering the siting of communication towers:

- A. Industrial parks
 - B. Industrial zoned lands
 - C. Commercially zoned lands
 - D. High density residential lands
 - E. Agriculture/Conservation zoned lands - non-ridge, wooded
 - F. Agriculture/Conservation zoned lands - non-ridge, open
 - G. Medium density residential lands
 - H. Agriculture/Conservation zoned lands - ridgeline
 - I. Low density residential lands
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4. Uniform mapping of tower sites

Regional Map - Each jurisdiction has agreed to contribute information necessary to compile a regional map showing all tower/antennae sites and providers using those sites within each jurisdiction. This will allow each jurisdiction access to existing tower information and assess the possibility of alternative sites. This map may also include all government owned property that may be available for co-location opportunities.

5. Consistent use of consultants to assist jurisdiction in review of requests

Consultants may be used from time to time by the jurisdictions to evaluate the possible alternatives and potential impacts of the request on the jurisdiction and the surrounding areas. Wherever possible, the jurisdictions will share resources and collaborate on the request to provide the most beneficial and economically feasible use of a consultant.